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USA: Economics, Politics, Ideology

No 6, June 1990

National Security and National Priorities

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[Article by Yuriy Aleksandrovich Shvedkov, candidate of historical sciences and senior scientific associate at Institute of U.S. and Canadian Studies; passages in boldface as published]

[Text] At the beginning of this new decade, the world is clearly entering the initial period of a new non-confrontational era, but it will be a complex and contradictory period: The past is trying to assert its influence, and the future could bring previously unforeseen dangers. From the standpoint of the possible annihilation of all life on earth, nuclear arsenals are beginning to appear senseless, but they are still being improved. Modern communication systems have almost erased national borders, but violent outbursts of nationalism are spreading throughout the world. Scientific and technical progress is crossing new frontiers in production, the improvement of public health care, and the enhancement of the welfare of all mankind, but this has been accompanied by the threat of the catastrophic devastation of the environment, radiation and toxic poisoning, the pandemic spread of AIDS and drug addiction, poverty, and hunger.

All of this is naturally affecting many countries of the world to an equal extent and in different spheres, including the major powers—the USSR and the United States. In these countries it has become essential to set future national priorities and determine the place of national security concerns among these priorities, or, to put it more simply, to accomplish the sound and thoroughly considered distribution of the far from unlimited budget funds.

We must take a far from abstract interest in the increasingly heated debates over U.S. national priorities, and especially the relative significance of national security issues, which became a kind of idol to which trillions of dollars were sacrificed in earlier decades.

The indisputable improvement of the international situation has not produced significant results in this sphere yet. After all, the President requested 309 billion dollars for military needs in fiscal year 1990, or 28 percent of all federal expenditures, and received congressional authorization to spend 305 billion. The administration's request for fiscal year 1991 amounted to 306.2 billion dollars, which will cut expenditures by around 2.5 percent with adjustments for inflation. Furthermore, allocations for the most dangerous programs, like the SDI, are to be increased. Now, however, congressional leaders are suggesting that national security requests will be cut

severely from now on, and four out of every five Americans polled have expressed the opinion that the administration should pay more attention to such problems as the declining quality of education, environmental pollution, drug addiction, and the increasing number of poor and homeless Americans.

Etymology of the Term "National Security"

The term "national security" made its appearance in American political science a relatively short time ago—in the first postwar years. Before this, the prevailing term in U.S. terminology, just as in the terminology of other states, was "defense," or "defense capability," reflecting the natural desire to defend one's own territory and borders. It was even used during the years of the two world wars, although this was less a matter of the defense of the territory of the United States, which was protected by two vast oceans, than of the defense of friendly countries.¹

The new term came into national use with the passage of the 1947 National Security Act, providing for the establishment of a National Security Council as a presidential advisory body. It was responsible for the substantiation of decisions on foreign, defense, and economic policy and the defense of national security interests against foreign threats. This attested that the term had transcended the boundaries of military policy, not to mention defense policy. It is indicative that the same act envisaged the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency as part of the NSC with extensive authority to carry out and coordinate all of the subversive intelligence activities of government agencies. These innovations were connected with the globalization of American strategy, which caused the "cold war" to become a confrontation between opposing socioeconomic systems and military blocs. The assigned purpose of this confrontation was not only military, although this was the main purpose, but also political, economic, ideological, and even subversive. As time went on, the scales of the military confrontation, based on the escalation of the arms race, actually grew instead of contracting and acquired self-generating properties.

For this reason, now that the cold war policy has become outdated and the United States is facing many new internal threats as well as external dangers, it is understandable that fierce arguments have broken out in the American political community. The focus of these arguments is the question of whether the term "national security" has become obsolete after more than 40 years, and whether the time has come to update the term, supplementing it with new priorities regarding the security of Americans. After all, today many of them are dying not on battlefields, but as a result of the spread of crime and drug addiction, as a result of traffic and industrial accidents, and as a result of the AIDS epidemic, and the welfare and well-being of future generations are being attacked by competitors from Japan, Western Europe, and the new industrial nations, which

acquired economic strength with the help of the Americans themselves during the cold war.

In a joint statement entitled "American Priorities in the New World Era," prominent American political scientists R. Barnet, L. Brown, S. Cohen, and others remarked that the subordination of various aspects of U.S. security to the idea of confrontation with the USSR reflected a dangerous warping of Washington strategy in domestic and foreign affairs. "We have united," the document says, "to issue this statement because we are deeply concerned about the future of our country. For decades America spent lavish sums on its military potential, ignoring the economic, social, and ecological problems on which its security and strength as a nation will ultimately depend. As a result of our own actions, we are on the road to ruin, and if we stay on this road, we will soon become a less prosperous and more vulnerable society."²

In accordance with the current interpretation of national priorities, American political scientists are already singling out aspects of security other than military and confrontational ones—economic, social, ecological, and demographic aspects. These include not only direct threats to the health and life of the present generation of Americans, but also threats capable of displaying their destructive force in the future. Obviously, this means that the Washington administration will have to consider the thorough reordering of national priorities both within the country and abroad.

Military Aspects of National Security

"National defense is the chief enemy of national security." This seemingly paradoxical remark was made by American researcher K. Boulding. He was trying to explain that the arms race was undermining national defense potential instead of strengthening it.

In fact, the country which was the first to develop and use nuclear weapons and which then worked tirelessly on the improvement of all types of weapons of mass destruction, does not have absolute security in the military sense today. Furthermore, the use of its arsenals would put America and the rest of the world on the verge of total annihilation.

The critics of Bush's national security strategy have pointed out the fact that current budget priorities are essentially the same as they always were and do not take changing realities into account. Researchers who have analyzed the designated purposes of military expenditures have concluded that they are largely inconsistent with common sense.

Strategic arms: Large sums are to be spent on the development and deployment of half a dozen new nuclear systems, including the MX and Midgetman missiles, which will duplicate one another and for which funds have already been allocated (around 100 billion dollars in the next 5 years). Most of the advanced systems are designed not to deter attack, but to be used

in complex war scenarios involving conventional and nuclear weapons. They are to be used to fight a war, and not to strengthen peace. It is widely acknowledged in the United States that the deterrence of nuclear attack would require only a small fraction of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, no more than a few hundred single nuclear warheads, especially if the other side has the same weapons.

Ally commitments: Even according to official admissions, more than half of the United States' current military expenditures are connected with its commitment to the defense of Western Europe. Renowned American historian and political scientist G. Kennan has described these expenditures accurately as "indefensible" and "wasteful." He remarked that "the military confrontation in Europe is disproportionate to the threat the two sides face. It is too expensive, burdensome, and dangerous to keep so many weapons and troops in the middle of Germany."³

American experts have cited the following arguments in support of this conclusion. Western Europe already has military-industrial potential comparable to that of the United States and could defend itself if necessary. Part of the U.S. contribution to NATO is helping West European competitors challenge the position of American businessmen in world markets and even in the U.S. market. Furthermore, under the conditions of substantial reductions in the armed forces of the USSR and other Warsaw Pact states in Western Europe, the sense of the "Soviet threat" is disappearing, and attitudes in favor of closer economic and technological cooperation with the East are growing stronger.

Finally, any war in Europe would be suicidal for both sides because of the many nuclear power plants there, but little has been written about this in America. As American author E. Janeway stressed, "The economy of Western Europe has installed its own deterrent in the form of an entire network of commercial nuclear power plants. Any attack on Western Europe will cause a Chernobyl reaction of gigantic proportions, which will be all the more lethal because it will be more difficult for Russia to defend itself against this than against the invasions of Genghis Khan, Napoleon, and Hitler."⁴

As for the Asian-Pacific region, which also takes around 60 billion dollars out of the U.S. budget, American experts do not doubt the ability of Japan, and now of South Korea as well, to defend themselves without Washington's help in the event of a local conflict. The buildup of U.S. air and naval forces in East Asia and the Pacific would make sense, they feel, if there were a chance of a new world war and if there were some reason for military operations against the USSR in Europe and the Far East, but this prospect is clearly improbable at this time.

Military potential in the Third World: Large sums are also being spent on the maintenance of American military bases and armed forces in the developing countries, but, as American experts have pointed out, the shift in

Soviet foreign policy in favor of the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts could turn the USSR into a partner instead of a rival of the United States, and, what is more, into a partner interested in the settlement of local disputes.

Besides this, there is a growing awareness in the United States that the many different threats to U.S. interests in the Third World are primarily non-military in nature and are connected largely with the economic and socio-political effects of the debt crisis in the Latin American and African countries. "The standard of living is declining," the previously cited statement of the American researchers says, "and dissatisfaction is growing. This is threatening democracy and stability in such key countries as Brazil, Mexico, Peru, and Argentina. The strict austerity measures connected with the debts are enough in themselves to reduce American exports to the Latin American countries and increase the flow of illegal immigrants to the United States from those countries. In this sense, U.S. economic policy, especially the particularly high interest rates, due partially to the deficit financing of military expenditures, has hurt U.S. interests more than any hypothetical USSR-incited aggression could."⁵

This means that the American expenditures on the maintenance and support of U.S. armed forces abroad, which absorb a huge portion of the national military budget, have had at least two extremely negative effects on the security of the Americans themselves. First of all, the presence of these forces in different parts of the world increases the danger of unplanned and, possibly, unpremeditated conflict with unpredictable consequences. Second, the maintenance of these forces has been a waste of colossal material and human resources that would be far from superfluous in the safeguarding of other aspects of the American people's security.

The economic implications of the arms buildup: The soaring military expenditures, financed by the taxpayers and also by foreign loans to some extent, during the years of the Reagan administration lowered the level of capital investments in production and slowed down the growth of labor productivity. The tax reforms of these years did not lead to the modernization of industry. Insurmountable deficits in the federal budget and in foreign trade and international payments reflected the assault of Japanese and West European competitors on the U.S. economy.

Of course, administration spokesmen like to point out the fact that the United States is now experiencing its longest period of economic growth in many years (but, we must say, at slower rates) and that there are many new jobs in the country (but these are almost exclusively in the sphere of non-industrial services). These arguments have been questioned by respected economists and financiers. Here is what S. Schlosstein, who was until recently the vice president of Morgan Guaranty Trust, a well-known investment bank on Wall Street, has to say, for example, in his book "The End of the American

Century": Today America is a country "which has watched its population's standard of living decline, its industrial influence threatened by foreign competitors, its political system undermined by the nearsightedness (and money) of pressure groups, the indicators of its public education fall to a disastrously level, its children suffering from the emotional trauma of divorce and the absence of one parent, its society disintegrating under the influence of drugs, its national defense weakened by fraud and mismanagement, and its status as the global leader questioned—and all within the lifetime of a single generation."⁶

Expenditures on military R & D rose from 13 billion dollars in 1960 to 60-100 billion in 1986—i.e., to a sum exceeding total government expenditures on the development of new power engineering technologies, public health care, the enhancement of agricultural productivity, and environmental monitoring. The countries with a lower volume of military R & D, especially Japan and the FRG, were at an advantage. Foreign competitors acquired stronger positions in the American high technology market and even in the country's financial markets and its leading commercial and investment banks.

This situation is now regarded as a serious threat to the well-being of the United States. This is attested to, for example, by a NEWSWEEK public opinion poll. When Americans were asked what posed a bigger threat to the United States, the military strength of the USSR or the economic strength of Japan, most of them (52 percent) said it was Japan, and only 33 percent said it was the USSR.⁷ These feelings are motivating researchers to analyze other, non-military components of national security.

Non-Military Priorities

President D. Eisenhower once described the reciprocal connection between the military and socioeconomic elements of security quite eloquently. "Each weapon we produce," he said, "each naval ship we launch, and each missile we build ultimately represent a theft from those who are hungry and have nothing to eat and from those who are cold and have nothing to wear."⁸ This statement is still relevant today. It has been acknowledged that the gap between wealth and poverty has never been as great in all of the postwar years as it is today. The burden on military expenditures has begun to threaten the health of the American economy and society.

The spokesmen of the Bush administration try to address the new problems of American society, but without cuts in the military budget it will be impossible to find enough money to solve them. This is why most of the arguments in the American Congress today focus on the redistribution of budget allocations.

Economic security, in the opinion of American experts, should meet at least two conditions. The first is the preservation of the country's economic autonomy and its ability to make decisions on economic development in the United States' own interest. The second is the

maintenance of the present standard of living and its continued elevation. Many American experts are worried about the prospects for the fulfillment of these conditions.

The large budget deficits and the practice of covering them with borrowed funds are constantly increasing the national debt. In 1989 it had already reached 2.8 trillion dollars. In 1989 the interest on this debt cost the government 240 billion dollars, or 12 percent above the 1988 figure. These interest payments have become the second largest budget item, surpassed only by military expenditures. It is obvious that in the event of a recession, this accumulation of debts by the federal government will seriously complicate its financial operations and will place a heavy burden on the standard of living of subsequent generations over the long range.

The gap between imports and exports has led to a situation in which the dollars the Americans spend on foreign goods have begun to return to the United States in the form of direct and portfolio investments. At the end of 1988 the latter amounted to 1.79 trillion dollars, as compared to the 1.25 trillion in American investments abroad. Japanese and other foreign businessmen have begun buying real estate in the United States and U.S. banks and industrial corporations. Direct foreign capital investments in the United States rose from 14 billion dollars in 1971 to 329 billion at the end of 1988—i.e., a 23-fold increase. Now they exceed the direct capital investments of American firms abroad, which totaled 327 billion dollars in that time. A particularly irate wave of dissatisfaction was aroused in the United States when Japanese concerns purchased the controlling stock in such prestigious American firms as Rockefeller Center, Columbia System Records, and Columbia Pictures at the end of 1989. One of the editors of the influential magazine FOREIGN POLICY, T. Omerstead, had this to say about the takeovers in his article "The Sale of America": "The most common apprehension regarding foreign capital investments is that they will restrict the economic and political autonomy of America. Foreign indebtedness and foreign ownership mean dependence and vulnerability. Ownership goes along with control over economic decisions and influence on political decisions."¹⁰ Obviously, it is too early to speak of the United States' dependence on foreign owners, but events in the American economy, just as in many other spheres, are developing at great speed. The United States already cannot make decisions as freely as it did just a couple of decades ago in at least the fields of international finance and trade.

The social aspect of public security, as the last few decades of U.S. history have demonstrated, consists of the pronounced property inequalities in the richest Western country, which became much more apparent under the Reagan administration, the tense relations with ethnic minorities, which occasionally turn into open conflicts, organized crime, and drug addiction.

Recent American statistics indicate that 13.1 percent of the Americans live below the poverty line (in comparison with 11.7 percent in 1979).¹⁰ The Bush administration's intention to allocate 4.2 billion dollars for aid to the poor and homeless was an official acknowledgement of their pitiful status. It is true that the 3-year program will not begin until fiscal year 1991, and even this will depend on the improvement of the state of the budget.

The United States has turned into the largest market for illegal drugs, and Washington has won the reputation of the "murder capital." Around 650,000 Americans are already behind bars, and more and more new prisons are being built.

Ecological security has become a matter of increasing concern to the American public along with national and international security. According to a report of the National Center for Public Opinion Research, in 1989 Americans named environmental protection as the highest priority in the distribution of budget allocations for the first time, relegating the problems of crime and public health care to a secondary position. In 1989, 75 percent of the respondents said the environment was the biggest problem, whereas only 51 percent of the Americans expressed this opinion in 1980.

Of course, it would be difficult to expect the American administration to cover all of the direct and indirect ecological costs connected with the production of nuclear and chemical weapons and other military activity in the next few years, but it will have to allocate large sums for this purpose. At the end of summer 1989, for example, Secretary of Energy J. Watkins published his plan to combat the radioactive pollution of the areas surrounding enterprises producing nuclear warheads. It is a 30-year program, requiring 21 billion dollars just for the first 6 years.¹¹

The demographic aspect of the security of Americans clearly has to presuppose satisfactory rates of increase in the healthy, educated, and professionally trained population. American experts are also beginning to feel justifiable concern in this area. An article by Professor G. Foster from the National Security University of the Armed Forces on demographic shifts on the global and national levels and their implications for U.S. security, for example, stresses that population growth in the United States will stay below the world average even after the addition of immigration figures. Whereas the population of the United States represented 6 percent of the world population in 1950, in 1988 the indicator had decreased to 5 percent, and by 2010 it could fall to 4 percent. By that time, however, the percentages of Latin Americans and Asians in the total population will rise considerably (from 7 to 11 percent and from 1.6 to 3 percent respectively between 1980 and 2010). Most of these people, just as many black Americans, will have no chance of getting the necessary training for jobs in advanced fields of industry.¹² They can be described as lifetime dependants or permanent welfare recipients. As a result, the education and professional training of the

younger generation will be even more acute problems for the federal and local governments than they are today.

Therefore, even a brief summary of the non-military aspects of U.S. national security indicates that the government, in spite of its budget difficulties in the next few years, will have to cope with the need for new colossal investments within the country, without which the very survival of American society will be threatened.

Many U.S. politicians and even experts on the military economy see the solution in sizable cuts in the military budget. The size of the proposed cuts ranges from 100 billion to 160 billion dollars. Obviously, the process could begin with coordinated unilateral reductions in the military budgets of the USSR and United States, followed by more specific agreements in this field. After all, the military budget of the USSR for 1990 has already been reduced by 8.2 percent.

These cuts in the military budgets of the two powers would be all the more significant in view of the fact that the internal problems complicating their development, from the budget deficits and the related shortage of capital investments to the pollution of the environment, on which the health of the population largely depends, are closely interrelated and are common to both powers. Of course, there are significant differences as well. The American society is suffering more from drug addiction and crime, for example, whereas the USSR is experiencing the dramatic exacerbation of ethnic problems and difficulties in the consumer goods market.

It is clear that many of the items on the agenda of USSR-U.S. dialogue will determine the future of all mankind. Broader Soviet-American cooperation in averting the new threats endangering not only the United States and USSR, but also the rest of the world, and in solving so-called transnational problems will provide strong momentum for the mobilization of the appropriate UN mechanisms and for international cooperation in general.

Footnotes

1. SSHA: EKONOMIKA, POLITIKA, IDEOLOGIYA, 1988, No 11, pp 81-85.
2. WORLD POLICY JOURNAL, Spring 1989, p 203.
3. ARMS CONTROL TODAY, 28 September 1989, p 4.
4. E. Janeway, "The Economics of Chaos. On Revitalizing the American Economy," New York, 1989, p 353.
5. WORLD POLICY JOURNAL, Spring 1989, p 215.
6. S. Schlosstein, "The End of the American Century," New York, 1989, p ix.
7. NEWSWEEK, 2 October 1989.
8. Quoted in "State of the World 1989," edited by L. Brown et al, New York, 1989, p 136.

9. FOREIGN POLICY, Fall 1989, p 125.

10. INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 23 October 1989.

11. BUSINESS WEEK, 14 August 1989, p 44.

12. THE WASHINGTON QUARTERLY, Spring 1989, p 8.

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Are There Any Political Prisoners in the United States?

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[Article by S.A. Chervonnaya; passages in boldface as published]

[Text] The official answer to this question has always been the same: There is not one political prisoner in the American prison "population" of more than half a million. Law enforcement agencies support this answer. With some reservations, this opinion is shared by Amnesty International, the famous international organization which defines political prisoners as people who are convicted "solely for their beliefs."

It is true that no inmate of an American prison has been convicted for dissident views (just as, incidentally, there are no articles of American law similar to our regrettable 70th and 190th articles). There have been no political trials in the United States in the last three decades. Dozens of American prisoners describe themselves as prisoners of conscience, however, and many public organizations and liberal attorneys are defending them. The special reports and informational materials of public organizations that appear periodically in the liberal and leftist press do not agree at all with the official position.

Here is the story of Bonnie Urfer, an inmate of Alderson, a federal prison in West Virginia, as told by her in the monthly PROGRESSIVE,¹ where she once worked: "On a hot August morning in 1988, five of my colleagues from Nukewatch and I climbed over the fence of the missile site on a U.S. Air Force base. This was a symbolic act by fighters for peace and disarmament. We sang songs and waited uneasily for the inevitable approach of the troops. They did not take long to arrive." Now the author of this article is serving a prison sentence. But whereas the actions themselves were what Urfer describes as an "endurance test," the subsequent trial was "violent and confrontational." "We walked into the courtroom expecting justice and a fair trial," she recalls. "We expected a jury of our peers to listen to our point of view and the government's point of view. We expected all of the testimony to be balanced." Bonnie Urfer and her friends, however, were never given a chance to explain their motives.

In the eyes of American law enforcement agencies, she is a common criminal who was guilty of trespassing, disturbing the peace, refusing to disperse, etc. PROGRESSIVE editor Matthew Rothschild presents logical arguments to refute this view. "Of course there are political prisoners in the United States," he quotes a remark by Adjoa Aiyetero, one of the attorneys on the staff of the American Civil Liberties Union, an influential liberal organization. "People are in prison because they helped to organize protests against U.S. Government actions."²

Rothschild lists some of the organizations defending the rights of political prisoners. The newest is an organization formed at the end of 1988—"Freedom Now" (National Campaign for Amnesty and Human Rights for Political Prisoners). Its report, published at the beginning of 1989, lists 132 political prisoners, and it is presently investigating 60 other cases. The New York Center for Constitutional Rights is defending more than 100 political prisoners. The Committee Against the Marion Penitentiary Lockdown³ and the National Committee for the Release of Puerto Rican Prisoners-of-War published a collection of 67 biographies of political prisoners in 1988. "The U.S. Government insists that there are no political prisoners among the more than half a million inmates of American prisons," Michael Yasutake, a minister and the director of the Prisoners of Conscience Program of the National Council of Churches of Christ, wrote in the preface to the book. "But those of us who have communicated with political prisoners in the penitentiaries and with their supporters and family members, know that this is far from true."

Rothschild singles out four groups of political prisoners: those convicted purely for political reasons; those who were falsely charged with non-political crimes; those who committed nonviolent symbolic actions for political reasons; and, finally, those who committed acts of violence for political reasons.

The first group consists of people sentenced on the basis of the 1861 law on conspiracy to overthrow the government. This law is unique because it requires only the existence of a conspiracy, presupposing the use of violent means, and does not require evidence of the commission of concrete acts of violence. At this time, 14 activists of the struggle for the liberation of Puerto Rico are serving long prison terms in U.S. penitentiaries (from 55 to 90 years) for breaking this law. All of them were charged with conspiring to incite a riot, illegally concealing weapons, and carrying firearms across state lines. The members of this group do not acknowledge the jurisdiction of the United States and are viewed by American liberal legal defense organizations as prisoners-of-war.

The trial of the so-called "Ohio Seven"—activists in democratic movements who took part in the struggle against Washington's policies in Central America and southern Africa, against racism in the United States itself, and in defense of prisoners' rights—took place in Springfield (Massachusetts) from October 1988 to

November 1989. All of them were charged with conspiracy to overthrow the Government of the United States by planting explosive devices in corporate offices and military installations and by robbing banks, all the way back to the middle of the 1970s. The leftist radical GUARDIAN newspaper described this trial, which cost the taxpayers over 10 million dollars, as a propaganda gesture designed to intimidate leftist forces and fuel the public's fear of leftwing terrorists.⁴

The newspaper commented that the prosecution did everything to prevent the defense from mentioning the political motives for the defendants' actions. The court did not give defense witnesses a chance to talk about the political views of the accused. One of the four defense witnesses who were not even given a chance to testify, Professor Howard Zinn from Boston University, said that "for a nation priding itself on freedom of speech, there was far too little in this courtroom."

William Newman, Patricia Levasser's defense attorney, said it would be "difficult to invent a more political charge than conspiracy to overthrow the government.... This is an exceptionally rare charge, and it has always, with one exception, been brought against progressive thinkers." We should recall that this was the charge once brought against the activists of the labor movement—Eugene Debs, Emma Goldman, and Bill Haywood—and in the late 1950s it was mainly leveled against the activists of the movement for the liberation of Puerto Rico. The prosecution, however, was unable to convince the jury of the guilt of the accused. Nevertheless, the defendants are now serving a 45-year prison sentence on similar earlier charges.

The second group Rothschild singles out includes "political prisoners convicted on the basis of false charges of a non-political nature." These are the activists of social protest movements who became the victims of programs carried out by the intelligence community specifically for the purpose of undermining the civil rights movement of the black Americans and other mass movements, and of police brutality. They were sentenced to long prison terms on false charges. "In many cases the prisoners did not commit the crimes of which they were convicted, but since the U.S. Government will not admit that there are political prisoners in the country—in this respect it is not as honest as other governments—false charges, which are not formally political, are brought against people," Rothschild quotes ACLU attorney A. Aiyetero's words.

Here are the two best-known cases of these trumped-up charges: the cases of Leonard Peltier and Elmer Pratt. The first name is well-known in the USSR, and we will simply repeat some of the details of the case. Leonard Peltier, one of the leaders of the American Indian Movement, was the target, along with other Indian leaders, of a secret operation of the intelligence community and was sentenced to two life prison terms for the murder of two FBI agents. Although it was later learned that the FBI had concealed documents refuting the

ballistic data on the basis of which Peltier was convicted, all of his appeals have been denied.

Elmer Pratt was one of the leaders of the Black Panthers, a leftist radical negro organization. Along with other party leaders and activists, he was the target of a COINTELPRO intelligence community program aimed at neutralizing the black American movement. Within the framework of this program, branches of the organization were infiltrated by agents and informers, there were armed raids on its headquarters and the homes of its leaders, and charges were fabricated (with the aid of false witnesses, the testimony of paid informers, forged evidence, etc.). In July 1972 Pratt was convicted of killing a policeman and was sentenced to life in prison. It was later learned that the prosecution's main witness at the trial was a secret FBI informer. In fact, even three of Pratt's defense attorney's were FBI informers! All of the many appeals of Pratt's defense counsels have been rejected, and all of his applications for parole have been denied.

The continuous attempts to break Pratt's spirit were described in a GUARDIAN article.⁵ Last September Pratt was suddenly transferred to Folsom Prison from San Quentin in secret at night. In violation of prison regulations, he was not informed of the move in advance. They simply woke him up in the middle of the night and pushed him, barefoot and half-dressed, into a car, without letting him take any of his possessions. The official explanation which was offered later was that San Quentin would no longer be a maximum security prison. Pratt's attorney, Stewart Hanlon, is afraid that the "Department of Corrections wants to put Pratt where something might happen to him." Pratt himself describes the transfer as "a continuation of what COINTELPRO was doing in the 1960s and 1970s to discredit fighters for human rights and brand them common criminals...."

Rothschild's third group consists of people who have committed non-violent symbolic acts for political reasons. Most of these people took part in protest demonstrations on the grounds of various military nuclear sites to block the movement of military freight, penetrate military installations, and cause symbolic damage for purely political purposes. Actions of this kind frequently require considerable personal courage. The corporations producing weapons and the U.S. Government accuse peace movement activists of crimes against humanity. In 1988 alone, Rothschild writes, 4,130 anti-war demonstrators were arrested for symbolic acts of protest. At least 90 were convicted and had to serve prison terms of varying length—from 2 weeks to 17 years. Most of them call themselves political prisoners. They include Barb Katt, who was sentenced to 6 months in prison for participating in a protest demonstration in Omaha (Nebraska) in December 1986. "This was a 'crime' connected with the exercise of freedom of speech," he said. "I was making a statement against nuclear weapons."

The fourth group consists of people who have committed acts of violence for political reasons. They include former activists of the student and peace movements of the 1960s, the activists of Indian and negro nationalist groups, the supporters of the movement for the independence of Puerto Rico, members of anti-racist organizations, and the opponents of U.S. military intervention in Third World countries. The group includes former activists of the New Left movement of the 1960s Bill Dunn, Larry Giddings, Linda Evans, Marilyn Buck, David Gilbert, Alan Berkman, Judith Clark, Katie Bowden, and Susan Rosenberg. In the late 1960s and early 1970s they advocated the strategy of the "militant vanguard," using individual acts of terrorism to "turn society in a new direction." The group includes supporters of the violent expropriation of money for the needs of social protest movements. Some of these prisoners admit that they used violent methods of struggle against the U.S. Government and its policies, but many assert that the charges against them were fabricated.

"Regardless of our definition of political prisoners," Rothschild writes, "there is no question that people convicted for political reasons receive harsher sentences than common criminals."

Susan Rosenberg, a radical feminist and member of the anti-interventionist movement who was arrested in 1984 and was convicted of the illegal stockpiling of explosives, was sentenced to 58 years in prison. At the same time, as A. Ayetero points out, "a member of the Ku Klux Klan who was convicted of the same crime was sentenced to only 7 years." Ayetero concludes from this that "the U.S. Government is tolerant of preachers of white supremacy."

The discrimination against political prisoners, however, is not confined to exceptionally strict penalties. They are sent to maximum security prisons, where they are incarcerated along with particularly dangerous felons and often become the targets of the tyranny and brutality of the prison administration and personnel and, in some cases, of behavior modification programs. Male political prisoners, Rothschild writes, are usually sent to Marion Federal Penitentiary (in Illinois), which has won the dubious distinction of the most brutal prison in the United States. When a delegation from the John Howard Association (a Chicago organization advocating prison reform) visited this prison, it reported that "the Marion prison program is intended to break the spirit and change the behavior of inmates and then impose new patterns of submissive behavior on them. A year or more in this penitentiary causes the complete breakdown of the personality."

A maximum security prison was opened for female political prisoners in 1986 in Lexington (Kentucky). This is where Bonnie Urfer was sent after she was sentenced. The conditions in this prison, according to her, were "appalling." The 1,300 inmates were packed in a "small and overcrowded building" where there were no chairs or tables in the cells. The one toilet and one shower for

every 25 inmates were, in her words, absolutely inadequate for normal hygiene. Besides this, prisoners were constantly humiliated by prison personnel. Most of the guards were men, and they made extensive use of their "right" to enter cells, showers, and even toilets and search the inmates at any time of the day or night. Only the intervention of legal defense organizations (including Amnesty International, which sent its observers to the prison and concluded that conditions there were "brutal, inhuman, and humiliating") in summer 1988 led to a court order to shut down the prison. The federal judge who issued the order, Barrington Parker, concluded, Rothschild writes, that incarceration in this prison was an act of "political discrimination": "It is one thing to send prisoners who have tried to escape or who represent a special risk to corrective establishments to a maximum security prison, but the incarceration of anyone in a maximum security prison for his past political ties, when nothing but brutality will force him to give them up, is an extremely dangerous tendency in this country's prison system."

Footnotes

1. PROGRESSIVE, May 1989, pp 18-21.
2. Ibid., pp 28-30.
3. In 1983 the prison administration decided to impose a lockdown—i.e., the severe restriction of the prisoners' contacts with the outside world and of their movements within the prison—Editor.
4. GUARDIAN, 8 November 1989.
5. Ibid., 11 October 1989.

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American View of Soviet Cooperatives

904K0022C Moscow SSHA: EKONOMIKA, POLITIKA, IDEOLOGIYA in Russian No 6, Jun 90 (signed to press 25 May 90) pp 102-103

[Article by Svetlana Rubenovna Kolupayeva, candidate of economic sciences and scientific associate at Institute of U.S. and Canadian Studies]

[Text] "Three Weeks That Shook My World"—This was the title of an article in FORBES by American computer expert Esther Dyson about her stay in the Soviet Union.¹ She describes her general impression as a state of shock: She was stunned by the severity and scales of the problems facing the society and by the high intellectual and cultural level of the people she met.

According to Dyson, she was immersed in an unfamiliar atmosphere where people are fully aware that the world has to be changed but have neither the experience nor the practical methods to do this. The Soviet people view their own economy as a hostile, unwieldy, and uncontrollable entity, and not as a flexible and manageable aid

in obtaining the means of production. Besides this, paradoxically, the mechanism of the direct connection between the results of work and rewards for effort, which has already proved to be so effective, is still not being employed in the USSR.

Only the cooperatives have made timid attempts to connect the worker with his own economic activity and make him the master of his own fate. It is quite logical that the American woman wondered why this is being done by the cooperatives rather than by private firms. "Apparently," she answers her own question, "cooperative ownership can do something to secure the advantages of private enterprise without undermining the bases of the prevailing Marxist-Leninist theory in the USSR, because, in the ideal, it does not presuppose exploitation." Well, maybe she is right.

When she visited some Moscow cooperatives in the computer engineering field, she saw some contradictions we might not have noticed ourselves.

The cherished dream of most of the computer cooperatives is not further development, but conversion into joint ventures with Western firms. The main advantages they see in this are direct access to hard currency and the prospect of traveling abroad.

All of the cooperatives have first-rate programmers, but not one has a management expert capable of the efficient organization of the entire process, from the birth of the idea to the manufacture of the final product. In the United States every firm has a program executive, and usually more than one.

The computer cooperatives have a contradictory relationship with government organizations. As a rule, the members of the cooperatives continue to work for these organizations or are at least listed on their staff rosters and frequently use the equipment there for the cooperative's projects.

The economic relations between the members of the cooperative are even more vague. In most cases it is impossible to determine exactly who owns what. In one cooperative they honestly admitted to the guest that they had just recently begun asking this question. As a rule, since most of the profit is reinvested, the question does not even arise.

In general, Soviet cooperatives are still quite immature by Western standards. They are headed by people with almost no business experience. And where would they get this kind of experience in an atmosphere of unlimited government authority, Dyson asks sadly.

Soviet businessmen have an entire group of intriguing proposals that might be of interest to Western firms, but they have no sample goods, informational materials, demonstration diskettes, or even ordinary business cards. In other words, the life of the Soviet entrepreneur is complicated considerably by the absence of the infrastructure that is so necessary at the birth of a new

business (training aids, reference materials, consulting centers, and informational publications).

For this reason, commercial relations develop spontaneously to a considerable extent and are therefore quite eclectic in nature. At the same time, the demand is so great that many cooperatives, including those in the computer field, do not need to advertise because they already have enough back orders to keep them busy for the next year or two. As a result, the present operations of a cooperative or joint venture are based largely on the personal inclinations, likes and dislikes, and priorities of its chairman rather than on a specially compiled plan.

Even in her 3 short weeks in Moscow, Dyson sensed the ambivalent attitudes toward the cooperative movement in the Soviet society. It is as if everyone realizes the need for rapid change in the economy but believes that the successful member of a cooperative is going against the socialist ethic. It is ironic that the person who does not break the rules cannot survive, but when someone boldly takes liberties with the rules, other people say that "he has forgotten how to be honest." The attitude toward the free market in the minds of Soviet people is reminiscent of the attitude toward free love: "It might be natural, but it is indecent!"

Because of this purely psychological barrier, the Soviet economy is sluggish. Most people have no commercial audacity. Dyson cites figures in her article which indicate that the people employed in state organizations work at 10 percent of their maximum output and in the cooperatives they work at 20 percent of their capacity.

Extremely rich intellectual potential is wasted when, for example, specialists with a higher education become drivers, laboratory assistants, and secretaries. Dyson calls them the lumpen-intelligentsia—the substratum of people who want to work and earn money but cannot find the right job.

The article ends with a fairly pessimistic remark: "Yes, things are moving ahead in the Soviet Union, but the process is more like the actions of molecules when the temperature rises. They move more quickly, but still haphazardly."

Footnotes

1. FORBES, 12 June 1989.

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USSR-United States: Problems of Common Security

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[Review by A.I. Shaskolskiy (Leningrad) of book "U.S.-Soviet Security Cooperation. Achievements, Failures, Lessons," edited by A. George, P. Farley, and A. Dallin,

New York-Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988, 746 + xi pages; passages in boldface as published]

[Text] This collective work, compiled by prominent researchers from Stanford University, is interesting because it was prepared by the researchers in conjunction with diplomats and other members of the U.S. foreign policy establishment who were directly involved in many of the diplomatic undertakings of the USSR and United States. The authors carefully examine 22 Soviet-American attempts to design international and regional arms control and security systems since the end of World War II. The authors' survey of Soviet-American relations begins in 1945.

This work was preceded by another collection—"The Regulation of American-Soviet Competition. Crisis Prevention."¹ The main issues were raised in that first work and are discussed in greater detail in the present work. The preparation of this publication (and the earlier one) was supervised by Alexander George, a professor of international relations from Stanford University, with P. Farley, who worked in the U.S. State Department for 35 years and has published several works on American military strategy.

The other authors include such renowned American scholars as A. Dallin, the author of several books on the USSR and Soviet-American relations; A. Nadel, a participant in several arms control and nuclear test ban talks; J. Nye, the well-known expert on nuclear strategy and Soviet-American relations; B. Blechman, a renowned political scientist; and many others.

Unfortunately, the confines of this review will not allow us to join the authors in "leafing through the pages" of the history of the relations between the two great powers. For this reason, we will discuss only the most important statements.

Most of the book deals with the efforts to establish efficient and stable cooperation between the USSR and the United States and introduce more order into international relations as a whole.

These include the efforts of the two countries to cooperate in crisis prevention and control. A. George, an acknowledged expert in this field, comments that "in the thermonuclear age, crises are sometimes a substitute for wars," and a controllable crisis offers a chance to prevent the holocaust of war (p 581). There are political means of controlling confrontations effectively: For example, by limiting the goals of one or both sides in the conflict or by restricting the means of attaining them (p 582). In addition, George lists several tactical means of crisis control (pp 582-583). Here is one of the main rules of sensible behavior at the onset of a crisis in Soviet-American relations: Neither power should initiate military actions. This leads to more specific rules: Neither "superpower" should use its advantage in a crisis to the point at which the other will have to choose between retreating and admitting defeat or resorting to military actions in desperation; both should act with particular

restraint in the other side's zones of vital interests and should not allow their regional allies to become involved in conflicts or military actions with the other side. Furthermore, according to A. George, arms control is not an autonomous and self-sufficient policy, but part of a concerted effort to safeguard security (pp 638-639). The author makes some interesting comments about the implications of the ideologization of Soviet-American relations:

The lack of consensus in the United States on the exact motives of the USSR results in diverging views on the scales and desirability of cooperation;

The suspicions born of ideological differences lead to the perception of cooperation as a transitional and irregular development which the rival accepts only for tactical reasons;

There is a strong tendency to rely on unilateral measures with short-term advantages instead of on the cooperation and restraint that promise long-term benefits;

The ideologization of competition promotes the choice and validation of more rigid decisions in the planning and deployment of the armed forces, based on the "worst-case scenario," and heightens suspicions about the USSR's adherence to treaties and about possible violations;

The ideologized mistrust of the partner gives rise to the assumption that the partner is violating the treaty even in cases of completely attainable solutions to problems, and so forth (p 660). George writes about the equal significance, interconnection, and interdependence of political and military-strategic relations.

Dallin offers his interpretation of the Soviet approach to security in relations with the United States. "What actually happened," he writes, "is that in the process of interrelations with the United States and other developed countries, the Soviet Union was unwittingly involved in an important educative process.... For Stalin, the security of the USSR was essentially conditional upon everyone else's lack of security. For Gorbachev, the security of the USSR is also the security of its allies and its rivals. 'There can be no USSR security without U.S. security,' the Soviet leader said" (pp 605-606). The author writes about the USSR's move from "conceptual isolationism" to the acknowledgement of interdependence in relations with the West and argues against the view that the "new thinking" is only rhetoric: The only way of verifying the efficacy of this line is to conduct more active negotiations in the belief that their success will strengthen the policies inspired by the "new thinking" in the USSR (pp 607, 615).

Farley examines U.S.-USSR cooperation in arms control. He analyzes 24 agreements (11 of them bilateral) and 4 sets of talks which failed. The success of cooperation in disarmament and the achievement of stability in the safeguarding of security, the author stresses, necessitates more than just the occasional success of talks. It calls for

common goals and principles to serve as a basis for the fulfillment of agreements (p 636). The author also addresses the problem of regulating elements of risk in the process of cooperation. Uncertainty and risk, he writes, are inherent features of the relations between sovereign states, calling for the reduction of uncertainty and the regulation of risk (p 679). He lists the criteria by which the sides should be guided in negotiations and agreements. Here are some of them:

The parties to an international agreement must rely on verification rather than on trust, and the agreement will be stable and reliable if the other side has an interest in adhering to it;

If there is an obvious interest in the agreement, verification should not focus only on apparent or possible violations, but will necessitate overall assessments of the effectiveness of the agreement in safeguarding security and stability;

The agreement must include thorough and precise definitions of the permissible and impermissible in order to exclude the possibility of misinterpretation;

There must be a mechanism for the settlement of disputes or ambiguities and other joint efforts to maintain the viability of the agreement;

If the agreement is violated or does not live up to expectations, security must not be threatened. The means of verification must be so reliable that there will always be enough time to take compensatory measures in the event of the disclosure of a new threat (pp 683-684) to negotiations and agreements, and the risk today is definitely less intense than it was 30 or even 20 years ago. According to Farley, however, the danger is still great.

Blechman discusses the inadequate (in his opinion) efforts to neutralize the threat of accidental nuclear war (pp 468-473). Of course, some joint measures were taken, he says, such as the installation of the "hot line" of communication between the leaders of the two countries. A new step was taken in 1987 when the centers for the reduction of the nuclear threat were established (p 467). Another step in this direction was the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate- and Shorter-Range Missiles, the flight time of which left only a few minutes for retaliatory military-technical action.

The efforts to regulate military activity in space are the subject of a chapter by S. Weber and S. Drell. The mutual involvement of the United States and USSR in the process of the militarization of space, the authors say, "offers a variety of possibilities for the development of mutually beneficial joint undertakings to strengthen the security of both states (or at least to cut off the channels for mutually undesirable competition)" (p 377).

Summing up the results of U.S.-USSR cooperation in strengthening security, the authors say that, in spite of all of the remaining problems, the two countries have

impressive successes to their credit. This, in their opinion, is an acknowledgement that unilateral measures are inadequate and that the security of one side depends on the policies of the other, forcing them to adapt to one another (p 712). The authors believe that there is no alternative to a deeper and broader structure of mutual security and to coordinated efforts in the safeguarding of security, and they express complete unanimity on this point. Nevertheless, it is probably worth noting that the issue of security at the end of the 20th century also includes ecological and technological security and reliable access to raw materials. There is an urgent need for cooperation in other fields as well—from public health care (including the fight against AIDS and drug addiction) to the potentially explosive problems of the Third World and terrorism.

Footnotes

1. SSHA: EKONOMIKA, POLITIKA, IDEOLOGIYA, 1984, No 6, pp 120-122.

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